

Specifying filter criteria

To enable your account to filter e-mail, you specify desired filtering actions you want **procmail** to take in your `.procmailrc` which is kept in your home directory; if you do not have such a file, run an editor and create one.

Each filter entry in `.procmailrc` should have the following format:

List {

```
:0:
* ^From.*owner-entex
entex-mail
```

authorized e-mail address

Folder #1 Folder #2 is junk

The `:0:` is needed for ? The second line is the filter match condition. In the above example, `* ^From.*owner-entex` matches any mail message with a line that starts with "From" and is followed (possibly with other characters intervening) by the string "owner-entex". So the following lines would match:

```
From: 12937813@sdjfh.ewoir. owner-entex
From: owner-entex@jj.uiuc.edu
```

[[Go to next section on filtering e-mail](#)]

[[Help home page](#)]

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(Last changed: 14-Nov-1995)

```
# An example .procmailrc file.
# (For more and fancier examples, type 'man procmail').

# Environment variable set up
# Do not change!

PATH=/usr/bin:/usr/ucb:/bin:/usr/local/bin
MAILDIR=$HOME                # This is the directory where mail boxes
#DEFAULT=$MAILDIR/mbx        # are stored.
LOGFILE=$MAILDIR/from
LOCKFILE=$HOME/.lockmail

# Don't change anything above this line.

# Filter examples now follow.

# Example 1.
:0:
* ^From.*madonnac
madonna-mail/
# Any mail from someone with 'madonnac' in their address will be stored
# in the mail file maddona-mail. Of course, I could change madonna-mail
# to any file name I choose.

# Example 2.
:0:
* ^From.*annoying-guy
/dev/null
# Any mail from annoying-guy gets thrown away without me even seeing
# it!

# Example 3.
:0:
* ^Subject.*music
music-mail
# Any mail with the word music appearing anywhere in the Subject line
# will get put in music-mail.

# Example 4.
:0:
* ^From.*mary
* ^Subject.*love
mary-good-mail
# Any mail from mary with the word 'love' appearing in the Subject:
# line will get put in the file mary-good-mail.

# Example 5.
:0 c
* ^From.*joe
! frank@somewhere.edu
# A copy of any mail from joe will be sent to frank@somewhere.edu.
# Note the c in the first line!!
```

How to filter your e-mail

You receive way too much e-mail and would like the computer to filter and sort your messages for you. For example, you would like all messages from a certain person to go into a separate mail folder, or maybe you want all messages with a certain word in the subject line to be deleted before you see them. Can this be done?

Yes it can. Certain mail programs, for example `elm` or `pine` can do some sorting or filtering, and if you use either you can look at the appropriate documentation for more information. But there is a general purpose mail filtering program called **procmail** which is very powerful and not very difficult to use.

- What does **procmail** do?
- Setting up your account to use **procmail**
- Specifying filter criteria
- An example `.procmailrc` file. [under construction]
- How do I see what mail has arrived in my various mailboxes?
- How do I read one of these files that contains my filtered e-mail? [under construction]
- What is a mail folder?

If you have other questions about mail filtering, please ask one of the consultants or send mail to help.

[Help home page]

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(Last changed: 14-Nov-1995)

What does procmail do?

As each mail message addressed to you is received by the system, the computer looks in your home directory for a file named `.procmailrc` and if this file exists scans it to see if the mail message meets any of `.procmailrc`'s filter criteria are met. If **procmail** finds that the mail message meets one of the filter criteria in `.procmailrc` it redirects the message according to the filter criteria's action.

For example, if you were to receive a message from someone with the words *Bowling league* in the Subject line of the message, and your `.procmailrc` file contained the following lines:

```
:0:
* ^Subject.*bowling league
  bowling-mail
```

then that message would be put immediately into the mail folder `bowling-mail`. Note that you would not receive a message saying that you had new mail because the message never reaches your system mailbox.

A sample `.procmailrc` file is available with several examples.

[[Go to next section on filtering e-mail](#)]

[[Help home page](#)]

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(Last changed: 11-Apr-1996)

Setting up your account to filter e-mail

All you have to do is create a `.procmailrc` file and put filter criteria in it. The system takes care of the rest.

[\[Go to next section on filtering e-mail\]](#)

[\[Help home page\]](#)

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(Last changed: 10-17-95)

Checking what filtered e-mail has arrived

To see what e-mail has arrived and been filtered, change to your home directory (by typing `cd`) and then type `mailstat` from.

[[Go back to filtering home page](#)]

[[Help home page](#)]

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(Last changed: 10-17-95)

Mail folders and how to read them

You may not know it, but you can have mail stored in many places: your system mailbox, your `mbox`, your outgoing mail file, plus numerous other. Each of these places is in reality simply a file called a mail folder. To read mail in one of these mail folders, say to read mail in your `mbox`, you merely type `mail -f mbox`. If you want to read mail in another mail folder, replace `mbox` with the name of the folder you want to read. Note that to read the mail in a given folder, you must be in the same directory as that folder.

[\[Help home page\]](#)

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exmh-users

[\[Top\]](#) [\[All Lists\]](#)[<prev](#) [\[Date\]](#) [next>](#)

Search

[\[Advanced\]](#)[<prev](#) [\[Thread\]](#) [next>](#)

.procmailrc

from [\[Nick Djurovich\]](#)[\[Bookmark Link\]](#)[\[Original\]](#)To: exmh-users@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Subject: .procmailrc

From: Nick Djurovich <etlndh@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>

Date: Thu, 08 Feb 1996 11:02:34 GMT

Hi,

I've been using procmail to forward my mail to different mailboxes. I'm having a little trouble with the 'recipes'. Some work and some don't and I can't see why.

The mails that do not get sorted end up in inbox.

Here is a recipe that works, along with a typical header that gets forwarded correctly.

recipe :

```
# Store paul's mail
:w:$MAILDIR/.lock
* ^From.*pcashman
| /usr/local/lib/mh/rcvstore +private/paul
```

header :

```
From: pcashman@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Date: Mon, 29 Jan 96 16:55:56 GMT
To: etlndh@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
```

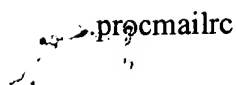
Here is a recipe that doesn't work along with a header that does not get forward but ends up in inbox.

recipe :

```
# Store seanrichardson mails in apstools
:3w:$MAILDIR/.lock
* ^From.*etlsnrn
* ^From.*seanrichardson
* ^From.*etljhan
* ^From.*apsowner
| /usr/local/lib/mh/rcvstore +junk/apstools
```

header :

```
Reply-to: seanrichardson <etlsnrn@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
Date: Wed, 7 Feb 96 14:04:00 GMT
To: apstools
From: seanrichardson <etlsnrn@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
```


procmailrc

WHY ?

The only thing that I've noticed is that recipes with only the single default recipe work, whereas any recipe with multiple recipes don't. Coincidence ?

/Nick

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[\[More with this subject...\]](#)

[<Prev in Thread\]](#)

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[\[Next in Thread>](#)

- [.procmailrc, Nick Djurovich](#) <=

Previous by Date: [More.../Sort by Date, Markus Kucborski](#)

Next by Date: [Re: More.../Sort by Date, John Haxby](#)

Previous by Thread: [More.../Sort by Date, Markus Kucborski](#)

Next by Thread: [maildelivery prob, Kevin Fowler](#)

Indexes: [\[Date\]](#) [\[Thread\]](#) [\[Top\]](#) [\[All Lists\]](#)